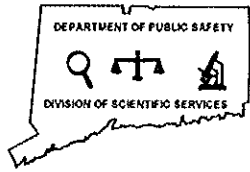




STATE OF CONNECTICUT



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

John A. Danaher III
Commissioner

Lieutenant Edwin S. Henion
Chief of Staff

March 12, 2010

Sen. Donald J. DeFronzo, Co-Chair
Rep. Antonio Guerrero, Co-Chair
Transportation Committee
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

SB 427: AAC THE USE OF HAND-HELD MOBILE TELEPHONES AND MOBILE ELECTRONIC DEVICES BY MOTOR VEHICLE OPERATORS

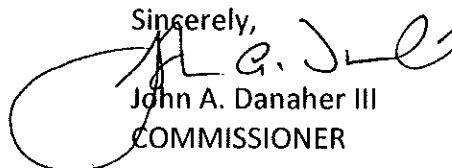
The Department of Public Safety supports efforts to combat distracted driving and suggests adoption of language contained in SB 35. Both this bill and Senate Bill 35 would eliminate the language providing that a first time violator can have the fine suspended by showing proof of subsequent purchase of hands free device. The law banning use of a mobile telephone while driving was passed in 2005, and there has been more than sufficient time for the public to be educated about the ban and purchase hands free devices. The continued presence of this language results in cases being nolle and difficulties in enforcing this important public safety policy.

Both bills offer language to make it expressly clear that texting is a violation.

The federal government is moving on this issue, having already banned texting for truck and bus drivers, with significant civil and criminal penalties. Further, there are proposals in Congress to impose funding sanctions on states that do not enact laws prohibiting texting while driving. This issue has become a priority after more than 5,800 people died in 2008 in accidents where at least one form of driver distraction was cited in the crash report.

Texting while driving can be every bit as dangerous as drunk driving, and the consequences can be just as devastating. There is a mindset among too many that there is nothing wrong with "multi-tasking" while driving a 4,000 pound vehicle at 65 miles per hour. Passage of a no texting bill, which incorporates the strategies of SB 35, will give the law enforcement community the tools it needs to change dangerous driving behavior.

Sincerely,



John A. Danaher III
COMMISSIONER